**Steel distribution from minister's discretionary quota**

3463. SHRIMATI SATYA BAHIN: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details regarding the names of the persons and firms along with the quantum and number of occasions when direct allocation of steel was made from Minister's discretionary quota during the last year; and

(b) the criteria for such allocation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) The Distribution Guidelines of the Joint Plant Committee do not provide for any discretionary quota for allocation of iron and steel by the Minister.

**Production/expenditure of steel**

3464. SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that per worker production of steel is very less in the country;

(b) whether it is also a fact that in other countries like Korea, Japan, Australia — per worker production of steel is much higher;

(c) whether it is also a fact that per worker expenditure is also higher in India;

(d) if so, what steps Government propose to take to increase per worker production; and

(e) whether there is any proposal to link wage with productivity in steel industries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) It is a fact that per worker production of steel is much higher in countries like Korea, Japan, Australia than in India.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Efforts are being made to improve productivity through modernisation of plants and equipments, improvement in work practices and retraining and redeployment of workers.

(e) While there is, at present, no such specific proposal under consideration, the public sector steel plants are constantly endeavouring to link wages and productivity.

**Higher cost of production of steel**

3465. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the cost of production of steel produced by Public Sector Steel Plants had increased during the decade 1980-89 by 145 per cent;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether it is a fact that steel plants abroad have reduced cost by upgrading their technology?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Reasons for increase in cost of steel are as follows:

(i) Increase in input costs due to increase in basic prices and transportation;

(ii) Higher incidence of taxes and levies on inputs;

(iii) Wide fluctuation in the quality of raw materials and services;

(iv) Inadequate investment made on introduction of cost effective technologies and processes.

(c) It is a fact that steel plants abroad have upgraded technology to improve productivity, reduce enegry consumption and improve quality.